

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 L-02 /047 W
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P 241133Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSG BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 168

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 1429

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH, PFOR

SUBJECT: US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 016499

1. ANSWER TO SECOND O&A IN REFTEL REQUIRES ALTERATION
TO FIT CIRCUMSTANCES HERE. SECOND SENTENCE OF ANSWER
SHOULD READ QTE ACTUAL IN-COUNTRY STRENGTH IS
SOMEWHAT LOWER THAN THAT, THOUGH THE FIGURES MAY
VARY SLIGHTLY FROM DAY TO DAY UNQTE. IF ASKED
APPROXIMATE CURRENT FIGURE FOR IN-COUNTRY STRENGTH,
REPLY SHOULD BE QTE ABOUT 25,000 UNQTE.

2. ON BACKGROUND WITH LOCAL AND FOREIGN NEWSMEN HERE
QTE ABOUT 25,000 UNQTE WAS USED AS IN-COUNTRY TROOP
LEVEL AT END OF 1974. THAT FIGURE HAS APPEARED IN
LOCAL PRESS AND WIRE SERVICE STORIES FROM BANGKOK.

3. USE BY USG SPOKESMEN OF TROOP LEVEL AUTHORIZED HERE,
WITHOUT GIVING APPROXIMATE NUMBER ACTUALLY IN COUNTRY
IF ASKED, WOULD SEEMINGLY CONTRADICT FIGURES MEDIA
ALREADY HAVE PUBLISHED. CONSEQUENTLY, MEDIA WOULD
QUICKLY INFER THAT US PLANNING INCREASE TROOPS HERE
IN REACTION TO NEARBY EVENTS. AMERICAN REPORTERS
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HERE ASSIDUOUSLY TRACKING ANY HINT AND MANY RUMORS OF

US RESPONSE IN THAILAND TO INTENSIFIED ENEMY ACTIVITIES
IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM.

4. ANY INDICATION THAT WE ARE BUILDING UP PRESENCE
HERE WITHOUT ACTUALLY DOING SO WOULD CREATE NEEDLESS
CONFUSION, PERPLEX THE MEDIA, STIMULATE THE READY IRE
OF A SEGMENT OF THAI PUBLIC OPINION AND RESULT IN
CONSIDERABLE FLAK AT A SENSITIVE TIME IN US-THAI
RELATIONS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSTRUCTIONS, PRESS RELEASES, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JAN 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO01429
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750027-0299
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750124/aaaaavdo.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 016499
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006